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ABSTRACT

This report presents an update on what has happened in college athletics since three previous reports published in the early 1990s. It was developed following a series of meetings with a broad range of sports representatives and higher education leaders. The report examines progress made by the NCAA toward a proposed "one-plus-three" model for intercollegiate athletics (presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification of athletics programs). The report concludes that the NCAA had made considerable progress toward achieving the goals but cautions that good intentions and reform measures of recent years have not been enough. It notes that the problems of big-time college sports have grown rather than diminished, and the most glaring elements of the problem (academic transgressions, a financial arms race, and commercialization) are all evidence of a widening chasm between higher education's ideals and big-time college sports. A call to action highlights the need for the higher education community to act together and for a coalition of presidents to act together to transform intercollegiate athletics. Five appendixes include additional issues for consideration, action on Knight Commission recommendations of March 1991, meeting participants, acknowledgements, and statement of principles. (SM)

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A CALL TO ACTION

Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education

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REPORT OF THE

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Commission On Intercollegiate Athletics

JUNE 2001

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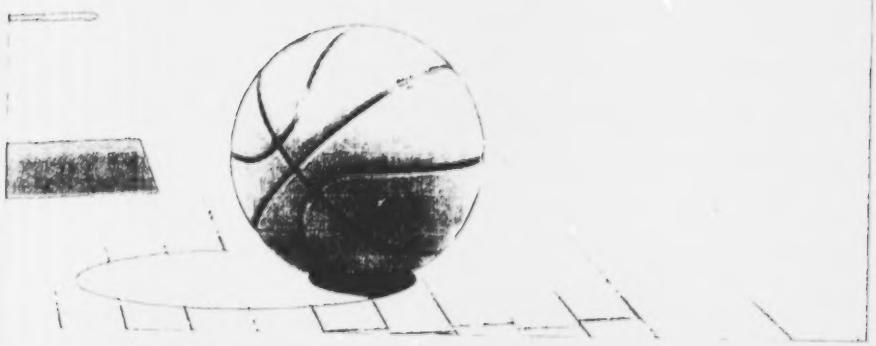
A CALL TO ACTION

Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education



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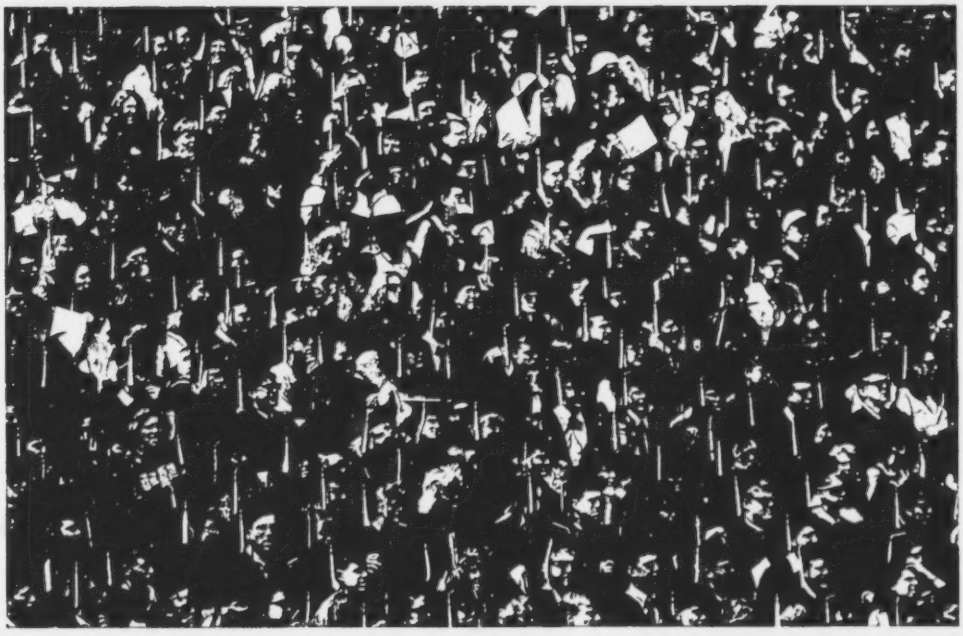

REPORT OF THE

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Commission On
Intercollegiate Athletics

JUNE 2001

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Letter of Transmittal

W. Gerald Austen, M.D.
Chairman, Board of Trustees
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
2 S. Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, Fla. 33131

Dear Dr. Austen:

With the approval of your board, the Knight Commission reconvened last year for a fresh look at what has happened in college athletics since our three reports were published in the early 1990s. After a series of meetings with not only a broad range of sports representatives but higher education leaders as well, we are pleased to submit our findings and recommendations.

Our earlier reports, as you know, proposed a new "one-plus-three" model for intercollegiate athletics – presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification of athletics programs – and urged its implementation by the NCAA.

The Commission now finds that the NCAA has made considerable progress toward achieving the goals the Commission laid out in its earlier reports. Many reform efforts have been undertaken with sincerity and energy. It is clear, however, that good intentions and the reform measures of recent years have not been enough.

We find that the problems of big-time college sports have grown rather than diminished. The most glaring elements of the problems outlined in this report – academic transgressions, a financial arms race, and commercialization – are all evidence of the widening chasm between higher education's ideals and big-time college sports.

Clearly, more NCAA rules are not the means to restoring the balance between athletics and academics on our nation's campuses. Instead, the Commission proposes a new "one-plus-three" model for these new times – a Coalition of Presidents, directed toward an agenda of academic reform, de-escalation of the athletics arms race, and de-emphasis of the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics.

Although individual members of the Commission may have reservations about some of the details of this agenda, we are unanimous in our support of the broad themes outlined in this document.

Given the enormous scope of this reform effort, the Commission recognizes that change will have to be accomplished in a series of steps over time. The hard work must be accomplished by a concerted grassroots effort by the broader academic community – in concert with trustees, administrators and faculty. Nothing less than such a collective effort can accomplish the reintegration of college sports into the moral and institutional culture of the university.

Despite widespread cynicism, the Commission remains hopeful. Several positive developments have emerged in the year since the Commission reconvened. Among them: The University of Nebraska Board of Regents adopted a resolution urging national limits on athletic program expenditures; a state of Washington ethics board has disallowed a direct contract between Nike and the University of Washington's football coach for performing what the board considered state business; and to date seven of the Pacific-10 Conference faculty senates have adopted a resolution urging their presidents to curb commercialization and the athletics arms race and to bring about academic reforms.

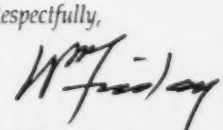
Perhaps most encouraging are plans for a meeting scheduled immediately following the release of this report. Presidents from colleges and universities in several Division I-A conferences will meet with conference and NCAA officials and leaders of higher education associations to discuss the ongoing reform of intercollegiate athletics. This is the kind of collective approach needed to correct the problems identified in this report.

We wish to express our profound gratitude to the Knight Foundation trustees for their long and steady commitment to creating a new climate for intercollegiate athletics. Knight Foundation has been an invaluable partner in working to move college sports into the mainstream of American higher education.

Assuming the Coalition of Presidents or some similar body is established by the higher education community, we see no reason to continue the life of the Knight Commission as it is now constituted. We do recommend, however, that the Foundation consider two ways in which it could make a significant contribution to the critical work that lies ahead. One would be to help fund the Coalition with matching grants to the American Council on Education, based on performance. The other would be to establish, perhaps with other foundations and the Association of Governing Boards, a separate and independent body – an Institute for Intercollegiate Athletics. The Commission envisions the Institute not as an action agency but as a watchdog to maintain pressure for change. It should keep the problems of college sports visible, provide moral leadership in defense of educational integrity, monitor progress toward reform goals, and issue periodic report cards.

Such steps can complement the work of college and university presidents but not substitute for it. In the final analysis, it is the higher education community that must finish the task. If not, it is not the integrity of intercollegiate sports that will be held up to question, but the integrity of higher education itself.

Respectfully,



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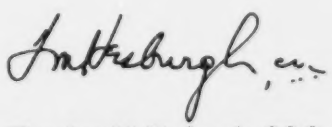

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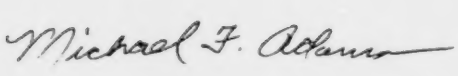

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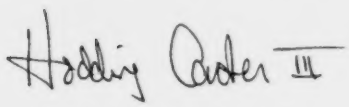

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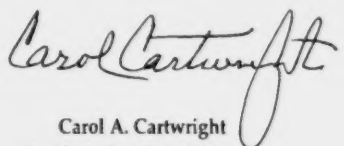

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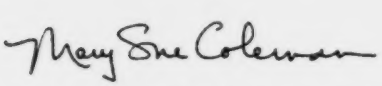

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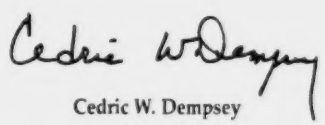

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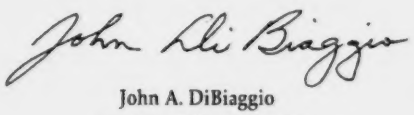

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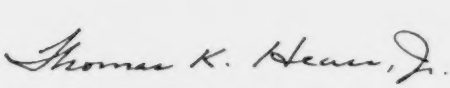

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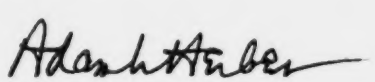

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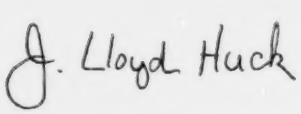

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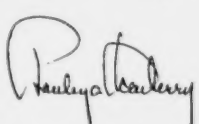

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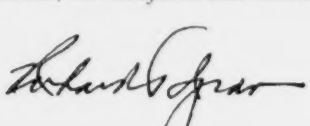

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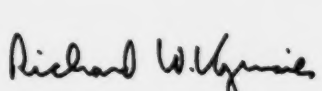

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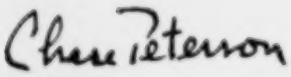
Former Member of Congress



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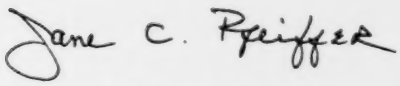

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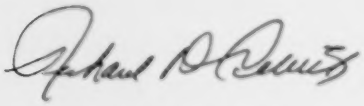

Richard D. Schultz
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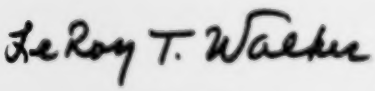

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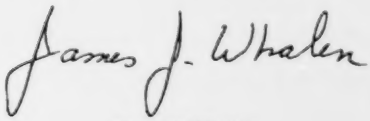

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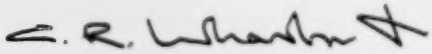

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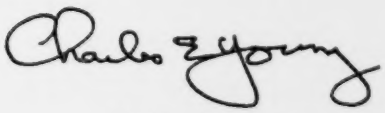

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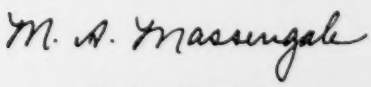

Martin A. Massengale
President Emeritus, University of Nebraska

Foreword

In 1989, as a decade of highly visible scandals in college sports drew to a close, the trustees of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation were concerned that athletics abuses threatened the very integrity of higher education. In October of that year, they created a Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and directed it to propose a reform agenda for college sports.

In announcing this action, James L. Knight, then chairman of the Foundation, emphasized that it did not reflect any hostility toward college athletics. "We have a lot of sports fans on our board, and we recognize that intercollegiate athletics have a legitimate and proper role to play in college and university life," he said. "Our interest is not to abolish that role but to preserve it by putting it back in perspective. We hope this Commission can strengthen the hands of those who want to curb the abuses which are shaking public confidence in the integrity of not just big-time collegiate athletics but the whole institution of higher education."

The trustees saw this as a goal worthy of a foundation that identified higher education as one of its primary interests, for the abuses in athletics programs had implications reaching far beyond football stadiums and basketball arenas. To understand their concern and the subsequent work of the Commission, it is necessary to look back on the extent to which corruption had engulfed big-time college sports in the 1980s.

In a cover story shortly before the Commission was created, Time magazine described the problem as "... an obsession with winning and moneymaking that is pervading the noblest ideals of both sports and education in America." Its victims, Time went on to say, were not just athletes who found the promise of an education a sham but "the colleges and universities that participate in an educational travesty – a farce that devalues every degree and denigrates the mission of higher education."

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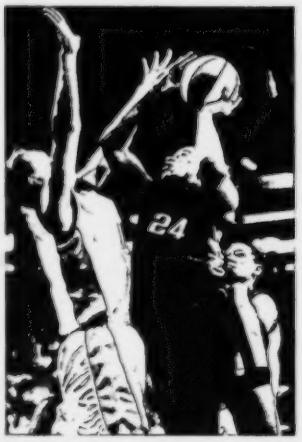
Here are some broad outlines of the problems the Commission saw then:



❑ In the 1980s, 109 colleges and universities were censured, sanctioned or put on probation by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). That number included more than half the universities playing at the NCAA's top competitive level – 57 institutions out of 106.

❑ Nearly a third of present and former professional football players responding to a survey near the end of the decade said they had accepted illicit payments while in college, and more than half said they saw nothing wrong with the practice.

❑ Another survey showed that among the 106 institutions then in the NCAA's Division I-A, 48 had graduation rates under 30 percent for their men's basketball players and 19 had the same low rate for football players.

At times it seemed that hardly a day passed without another story about recruiting violations ... under-the-table payoffs ... players who didn't go to classes or who took courses that would never lead to a meaningful degree. Even crime sprees at some athletic powerhouses were added to the list.

It was small wonder that eight out of 10 Americans questioned in a Louis Harris poll in 1989 agreed that intercollegiate sports had spun out of control. They agreed that athletics programs were being corrupted by big money, and felt that the many cases of serious rules violations had undermined the traditional role of universities as places where young people learn ethics and integrity.

A 1989 series in The New York Times raised another warning flag:

"High school athletics have become the latest entree on the American sports menu, served up to help satisfy the voracious appetite of the fan. As a result, scholastic athletes are on the verge of becoming as important to the billion-dollar sports industry as their college brothers and sisters – and just as vulnerable to big-time exploitation."

Somehow ... sanity had to be restored to this bleak scene and the values of higher education put above all else in the world of intercollegiate athletics.

Somehow, Knight Foundation concluded, sanity had to be restored to this bleak scene and the values of higher education put above all else in the world of intercollegiate athletics.

Neither the Foundation trustees nor the members of the new Commission were under any illusions that the task would be easy. As far back as 1929, another major American foundation – the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching – had published a compre-

Portland Oregonian
October 25, 1929

hensive study of college athletics and had reached conclusions that sounded distressingly familiar 60 years later: recruiting had become corrupt, professionals had replaced amateurs, education was being neglected, and commercialism reigned.

The problem had become worse in the intervening years as the popularity of college sports soared and millions of television dollars were poured into college athletics. The stakes had been raised, putting an even higher premium on winning.

Television money had also moved colleges and universities into the entertainment business in a much bigger way. Many of the most vocal and partisan fans were not students or parents or alumni, but people who valued winning more than they did the universities' underlying purposes. The thrill of victory, sports as spectacle, sports for gambling – these were their lodestones.

In the face of these trends, the good news was that it was still possible to point to major colleges and universities that ran successful athletic programs without sacrificing either their ethical standards or their academic integrity. As Knight Foundation saw it, reflecting the hopes of many others, the challenge of the 1990s was to develop and win acceptance of realistic reforms that would bring all of higher education's sports programs back under the academic tent.

As its contribution to meeting that challenge, the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics met repeatedly over a period of five years and produced three reports that helped channel the head of steam building up behind college sports reform in the 1990s.[1]

We reiterate our strong conviction that college sports, when properly conducted, are worth saving.

The Commission laid out an analysis of the problems facing college sports and proposed a "new model for intercollegiate athletics." This analysis was straightforward: Following decades of presidential neglect and institutional indifference, big-time college sports were "out of control." The reform agenda Commission members proposed was equally straightforward, the "one-plus-three" model – presidential control directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification.

No claim was made that their recommendations would solve all the problems tarnishing college sports, or even that all problems would ever be solved to everyone's satisfaction. "Reform is not a destination but a never-ending process," said the Commission's last report.

Despite the fact that the Commission held no formal authority, nearly two-thirds of its specific recommendations had been endorsed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association by 1993. It was not until 1996, however, that the most significant of these recommendations won approval when the NCAA voted to replace a governance structure controlled primarily by athletic administrators with a system that put college presidents in charge of all planning and pol-

1. The reports were: *Keeping Faith with the Student Athlete* (1991), *A Solid Start* (1992), and *A New Beginning for a New Century* (1993).

icy activities, including the budget.

A Knight Commission statement welcomed this development and underscored what it meant: "So now it's up to the presidents to deliver." With that, the Commission announced its formal dissolution but said it would be watching "with an interested eye" to see how the presidents handled their new power.

As the 10th anniversary of the Commission's first report in March 1991 approached, the members decided to reconvene for a fresh look at what has happened in this intervening decade and to assess the state of college athletics at the beginning of this new century. Had the situation improved or worsened? Were there new problems that warranted attention?

The report that follows presents the Commission's findings from a series of meetings in 2000 and 2001 with NCAA representatives, university presidents, a trustee board chair, faculty, conference commissioners, athletics directors, coaches, athletes, authors, professional sports executives, television officials, a sports apparel representative, a gambling lobbyist, leaders of national higher education associations, and a U.S. senator.

After assessing those hearings, the Commission concludes with some satisfaction that the NCAA has moved a long way toward achieving the goals laid out in the Commission's earlier reports (see Appendix B). Many reform efforts have been undertaken over the last decade with sincerity and energy. We reiterate our strong conviction that college sports, when properly conducted, are worth saving. Sports at all levels have been a source of immense satisfaction, self-discipline, and achievement for tens of thousands of young men and women.

That said, it is clear that good intentions and reform measures of recent years have not been enough. After digesting the extensive testimony offered over some six months, the Commission is forced to reiterate its earlier conclusion that "at their worst, big-time college athletics appear to have lost their bearings." Athletics continue to "threaten to overwhelm the universities in whose name they were established."

Indeed, we must report that the threat has grown rather than diminished. More sweeping measures are imperative to halt the erosion of traditional educational values in college sports. The evidence strongly suggests that it is not enough simply to add new rules to the NCAA's copious rule book or ask presidents to carry the burden alone. Higher education must draw together all of its strengths and assets to reassert the primacy of the educational mission of the academy. The message that all parts of the higher education community must proclaim is emphatic:

Together, we created today's disgraceful environment. Only by acting together can we clean it up.

Adapted from the introduction to the bound volume of the Commission's three reports published in 1991-1993.

Ten Years Later

It is tempting to turn away from bad news. To the cynic, corruption has been endemic in big-time sports as long as they have existed. To the rationalizer, reform is already under way and things are not nearly as bad as the critics make them out to be. More time is all that is needed. But to the realist, the bad news is hard to miss. The truth is manifested regularly in a cascade of scandalous acts that, against a backdrop of institutional complicity and capitulation, threaten the health of American higher education. The good name of the nation's academic enterprise is even more threatened today than it was when the Knight Commission published its first report a decade ago. Despite progress in some areas, new problems have arisen, and the condition of big-time college sports has deteriorated.

Consider as an example some simple statistics: As noted in the foreword, 57 out of 106 Division I-A institutions (54 percent) had to be censured, sanctioned or put on probation for major violations of NCAA rules in the 1980s. In the 1990s, 58 out of 114 Division I-A colleges and universities (52 percent) were similarly penalized. In other words, more than half the institutions competing at the top levels continue to break the rules. Wrongdoing as a way of life seems to represent the status quo.

The fact that such behavior has worked its way into the fiber of intercollegiate sports without provoking powerful and sustained countermeasures from the many institutions so besmirched speaks for itself. It appears that more energy goes into looking the other way than to finding a way to integrate big-time sports into the fabric of higher education.

At the heart of these problems is a profound change in the American culture of sports itself. At one time, that culture was defined by colleges, high schools, summer leagues, and countless community recreational programs. Amateurism was a cherished ideal. In such a context, it made sense to regard athletics as an educational undertaking. Young people were taught values ranging from fitness, cooperation, teamwork and perseverance to sportsmanship as moral endeavor.

All of that seems somehow archaic and quaint today. Under the influence of television and the mass media, the ethos of athletics is now professional. The apex of sporting endeavor is defined by professional sports. This fundamental shift now permeates many campuses. Big-time college basketball and football have a professional look and feel – in their arenas and stadiums, their luxury boxes and financing, their uniforms and coaching staffs, and their marketing and administrative structures. In fact, big-time programs have become minor leagues in their own right, increasingly taken into account as part of the professional athletics system.

In this new circumstance, what is the relationship between sport and the university as a place of learning?

At the time the Knight Commission was formed in 1989, the answers to that question were already sounding alarm bells. For example, the late A. Bartlett Giamatti, a former president of Yale who went on to become commissioner of major league baseball, said that "failures of nerve, principle and purpose" were threatening to "engulf higher education in ways unfair and dangerous." He argued that what had been "allowed to become a circus – college sports – threatens to become the means whereby the public believes the whole enterprise is a sideshow."

Now, in this new millennium, informed critics are equally scathing in their evaluations. James Duderstadt, president emeritus of the University of Michigan, put it this way before the Knight Commission in late 2000: Major college sports "do far more damage to the university, to its students and faculty, its leadership, its reputation and credibility than most realize – or at least are willing to admit." The ugly disciplinary incidents, outrageous academic fraud, dismal graduation rates, and uncontrolled expenditures surrounding college sports reflect what Duderstadt and others have rightly characterized as "an entertainment industry" that is not only the antithesis of academic values but is "corrosive and corruptive to the academic enterprise."

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Ten years ago, the Commission's efforts focused largely on big-time football and basketball programs. The most glaring problems seemed concentrated in these two sports. While that is just as true today, the Commission notes the influence-by-emulation of big-time programs

on sports other than football and basketball. William Bowen and James Shulman of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation detail the full impact of this "contagion" in their book, *The Game of Life*, which concludes that the skewed priorities of top programs have infected men's and women's sports at all levels, including, perhaps most remarkably, the Ivy League and elite private liberal arts colleges. It all leads, they write, to a single conclusion:

> "Intercollegiate programs in these academically selective institutions are moving steadily in the direction of increased tension with core educational values, and more substantial calls on the tangible and intangible resources of their host institutions. We cannot think of a single set of data that contradicts this proposition ... We are unable to identify any forces inside the system that – without considerable help – can be expected to alter these directions."

The most recent NCAA graduation rate report reveals that 48 percent of Division I-A football players and 34 percent of men's basketball players at Division I-A institutions earned degrees.

Nevertheless, what the Knight Commission has concentrated on again in this review of intercollegiate athletics is the impact and control of football and basketball at the most competitive level. At the core of the problem is a prevailing money madness. These sports programs have created a universe parallel to – but outside the effective control of – the institutions that house them. They answer not to the traditional standards of higher education but to the whims and pressures of the marketplace.

There is no question about who is winning this open, ever-escalating war between the academic and athletic cultures. In too many places, the tail already wags the dog. The acceleration of this development is a prospect that demands the engagement of presidents, trustees, faculties, and higher education associations.

The most glaring elements of the problems outlined in this report – academic transgressions, a financial arms race, and commercialization – are all evidence of the widening chasm between higher education's ideals and big-time college sports.

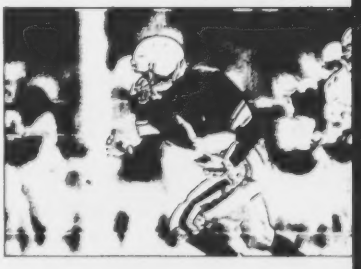
ACADEMICS

When the accretions of centuries of tradition and the bells and whistles of the modern university have been stripped away, what remains is the university's essential mission as an institution for teaching, learning, and the generation of new knowledge. This is the mission that big-time college sports often mock and, in some cases, deliberately undermine.

Big-time athletics departments seem to operate with little interest in scholastic matters beyond the narrow issue of individual eligibility. They act as though the athletes' academic per-

formance is of little moment. The historic and vital link between playing field and classroom is all but severed in many institutions. Graduation rates for athletes in football and basketball at the top level remain dismally low – and in some notable cases are falling. While the Commission recognizes that graduation rates for athletes subject to the NCAA's more stringent eligibility standards effective in the mid-1990s are not yet available, we cannot ignore these facts: The graduation rate for football players in Division I-A fell 3 percent last year and 8 percent in the last five years. The rate for men's basketball players at Division I-A institutions remained stable over the last year, but fell 5 percent over the last five years.

Graduation rates for both were already abysmal. The most recent NCAA graduation rate report reveals that 48 percent of Division I-A football players and 34 percent of men's basketball players at Division I-A institutions earned degrees. The graduation rate for white football players was 55 percent, the lowest since the Student Right to Know Act mandated that such records be made public. Only 42 percent of black football players in Division I-A graduate, according to the most recent figures.



Derrick Z. Jackson, a columnist for the Boston Globe, analyzed the graduation rates of African-American players on the 64 teams in the 2001 NCAA men's basketball tournament. He reports these shameful figures from the latest NCAA graduation rate report: Twenty-six of the 64 teams graduated fewer than 35 percent of their African-American players. Seven teams had African-American graduation rates of zero. Furthermore, he writes, "Of the 64 teams, a school was nearly twice as likely to have suffered a decline in its African-American player graduation rate since the mid-1990s than enjoy an increase. The rate in the 2000 NCAA graduation rate report was lower for 35 schools than the rate in the 1996 report. It was higher for only 19 schools."

An academic official at a Division I-A institution told Jackson in regard to the 10 percent graduation rate of its men's basketball team, "We have not in the past had the same high expectations of athletes in academics and not held them to as high a standard in the classroom."

In the face of these facts, many defend the overall graduation rates of Division I-A football and basketball players because in some instances they compare favorably to those of the student body as a whole. The Commission is unimpressed with this comparison of apples and oranges. The fact is that the rest of the student body does not have the advantage of full scholarships and the often extensive academic support services extended to athletes. Data from the U.S. Department of Education indicate that approximately 75 percent of high school graduates who enroll full-time in college immediately after graduation (and continue full-time in the same institution) will receive a bachelor's degree within five and a half years. This group of young full-time students is the appropriate comparison for Division I-A athletes.

Athletes are often admitted to institutions where they do not have a reasonable chance to graduate. They are athlete-students, brought into the collegiate mix more as performers than aspiring undergraduates. Their ambiguous academic credentials lead to chronic classroom failures or chronic cover-ups of their academic deficiencies. As soon as they arrive on campus, they are immersed in the demands of their sports. Flagrant violation of the NCAA's rule restricting the time athletes must spend on their sport to 20 hours a week is openly acknowledged. The loophole most used is that of so-called "voluntary" workouts that don't count toward the time limit. In light of these circumstances, academic failure, far from being a surprise, is almost inevitable.

Sadly though, it comes as a rude surprise to many athletes yearning for a professional sports career to learn that the odds against success are astronomically high. Approximately 1 percent of NCAA men's basketball players and 2 percent of NCAA football players are drafted by NBA or NFL teams – and just being drafted is no assurance of a successful professional career. "Student-athletes" whose sole and now failed objective was to make the pros suddenly find themselves in a world that demands skills their universities did not require them to learn.

The academic support and tutoring athletes receive are too often designed solely to keep them eligible, rather than guide them toward a degree. The instances of tutors or other counselors bending and breaking rules on athletes' behalf are a well-publicized scandal. NCAA case books clearly reveal multiple infractions stemming from "tutoring" involving completing athletes' assignments, writing their papers, and pressuring professors for higher grades. Beyond the breaking of the rules is the breaking of the universities' implicit covenant with all students, athletes included, to educate them. Despite new NCAA satisfactory progress requirements effective in the mid-1990s, press and NCAA reports repeatedly document instances of athletes being diverted into courses that provide no basis for meaningful degrees. A faculty member at a Division I-A institution who has recently spoken out against the transgressions she has witnessed on her campus said, "There are students on our football team this year [2000] who will graduate when both faculty and students know they cannot read or write."

THE ARMS RACE

NCAA President Cedric Dempsey, along with many others, has been outspoken about what he calls an ever growing "arms race" of spending and building to reach impractical financial goals. There is evidence to support these concerns. The NCAA's latest study of revenues and expenses at Divisions I and II institutions shows that just about 15 percent operate their athletics programs in the black. And deficits are growing every year.

"Clearly, the rising revenues on most campuses have been overwhelmed by even higher costs," Dempsey told the NCAA convention this year. "At the more than 970 NCAA member schools, we are bringing in just over $3 billion a year, but we're spending $4.1 billion in that same period."

A frantic, money-oriented modus operandi that defies responsibility dominates the structure of big-time football and basketball. The vast majority of these schools don't profit from their athletics programs: At over half the schools competing at the NCAA's Division I-A level in 1999, expenses exceeded revenues by an average of $3.3 million, an increase of 18 percent over the previous two years. On the other hand, for the 48 Division I-A institutions where revenues exceeded expenses, the average "profit" more than doubled, increasing 124 percent from $1.7 million to $3.8 million from 1997 to 1999. In considering all these data, moreover, it must be understood that they do not take into consideration the full costs of athletics programs, in that the reported expenses do not include capital expenditures, debt service, and many indirect program costs. Nevertheless, competitive balance is crumbling as the gap between the haves and the have-nots widens. While a relative few programs flourish, many others have chosen to discontinue sports other than football or basketball to make ends meet. Even some of the "haves" react to intense financial pressure to control costs by dropping so-called minor sports.

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Too much in major college sports is geared to accommodating excess. Too many athletic directors and conference commissioners serve principally as money managers, ever alert to maximizing revenues. And too many have looked to their stadiums and arenas to generate more money. In the last seven years, capital expenditures at Division I-A institutions (e.g., construction or remodeling of athletics facilities, capital equipment, etc.) increased 250 percent. From east to west, north to south, the test becomes who can build the biggest stadiums, the most luxurious skyboxes. Every one of the 12 schools in one major conference has built a new football stadium or refurbished its old one in recent years. All seem to have assumed they could not afford to do otherwise. The building boom in college sports facilities now under way across the nation will cost well over $4 billion, with the resulting debt stretching far into the future.

The arms race isn't entered into by NCAA fiat. Institutions, not the NCAA, decide what's best for themselves, and for many that means joining the arms race. Presidents and trustees accept their athletics department's argument that they have to keep up with the competition. When one school has a $50 million athletic budget and another gets along on $9 million, how can there be any pretense of competitive parity? And what about on-campus parity? A five-part series, "The Price of Winning," published by The Philadelphia Inquirer in fall 2000 revealed average annual costs as high as nearly $90,000 per athlete at one Division I-A institution. At some Division I-A schools, annual costs per football player are well over $100,000. How can such ex-

penses be justified when the average salary of fully tenured professors at U.S. public research universities barely exceeds $84,000?

And what does higher education sacrifice when a school names its football stadium after a pizza chain or its new stadium club after any other commercial product or corporation? To what purpose, indeed, are luxury skyboxes built? Not to satisfy any legitimate institutional need; certainly not to accommodate more students, in whose name and for whose benefit collegiate sports were originally introduced. The central goal is to garner greater fiscal windfalls from wealthy boosters and alumni willing to spend thousands of dollars to acquire not only luxury boxes but choice seating throughout the stadium, while students are often relegated to the end zone if they can get tickets at all. Interestingly, repeated studies indicate that most contributions to colleges and universities come from those to whom athletic records have little import. Big athletic boosters, conversely, are far less likely to support other aspects of the universities' life and mission, again according to these studies.

The NCAA's revenue distribution formula for its new CBS contract values each win in the Division I men's basketball tournament at $780,000. Thus, the stakes for a foul shot to win a game in the tournament will exceed three-quarters of a million dollars.

There is a tangible downside to this arms race for most schools, that is, for the majority whose big-time programs are less successful and cannot pay for themselves. They must siphon funds from general revenue to try to keep up with the Joneses. Pursuit of success in this context jeopardizes not only the universities' moral heritage but also their financial security.

A glaring symptom of the arms race run amok is the salaries of so-called "star" coaches. At last count, some 30 college football and men's basketball coaches are paid a million dollars or more a year. A few are nearing twice that, or are already there. The irony is not lost on the critics. A college provost points out that his school spent more money hiring the head football coach than it did hiring five department heads – combined. A trustee laments that his university signed the basketball coach to a salary three times greater than its president's. Many players join the complaining chorus when they compare their scholarships to their coaches' salaries, and when their coaches break contracts and jump from team to team – just as their professional counterparts do. Some dissatisfied players have begun to organize in an attempt to increase their clout and have aligned with the United Steelworkers of America for help in doing so.

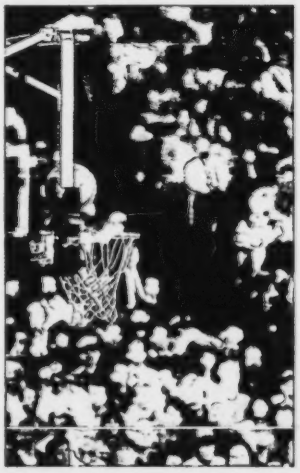
But coaches have quite a different perspective. They consider the pressures put on their teams' performance when football and basketball revenues are expected to produce the lion's share of the athletic department's budget. They weigh the dismissal rate of those in their ranks who do not win – or do not win soon enough, or big enough – in a win-at-any-cost environment. And they conclude that their salaries are justified.

The logical question for academia emerges: Is there any other department at a university where so much money is spent and justified primarily by reference to the nonacademic performance of its students, staff or instructors? That is the crux of the matter. Coaches' salaries, like

numerous athletics department expenditures, are considered as though they have nothing to do with the traditions and principles of the universities in which they are housed. This lack of academic connection is the fundamental corruption of the original rationale for both sports and coaches on campus: that they are integral components of a well-rounded student life and a useful complement to the universities' other central pursuits. What we have now is a separate culture of performers and trainers, there to provide bread and circuses but otherwise unconnected to the institution that supports them.

COMMERCIALIZATION

Over the last decade, the commercialization of college sports has burgeoned. Vastly larger television deals and shoe contracts have been signed, and more and more space in stadiums and arenas has been sold to advertisers. In too many respects, big-time college sports today more closely resemble the commercialized model appropriate to professional sports than they do the academic model. The NCAA's Dempsey warned the NCAA membership recently that "the level of cynicism over the commercialization of our most visible athletics programs has reached epidemic proportions."



Beginning in 2002, CBS will pay the NCAA $6.2 billion over an 11-year period for broadcast rights primarily for its Division I men's basketball tournament. Television accounts for nearly 80 percent of the NCAA's revenue. When all sources of revenues are accounted for, the Division I men's basketball tournament alone generates well over 90 percent of the NCAA's operating budget. And much of the television money is distributed based on winning basketball games. The NCAA's revenue distribution formula for its new CBS contract values each win in the Division I men's basketball tournament at $780,000. Thus, the stakes for a foul shot to win a game in the tournament will exceed three-quarters of a million dollars. The players are fully aware of these economics, and they feel the pressure.

With the money comes manipulation. Schools and conferences prostrate themselves to win and get on television. There is a rush now to approve cable and television requests for football and basketball games on weekday evenings, on Sundays, in the morning, and late at night. So much for classroom commitments. On the field, the essential rhythms of the games are sacrificed as play is routinely interrupted for television commercials, including those pushing the alcoholic beverages that contribute to the binge drinking that mars campus life.

Arguments that higher education should be above this commercial fray largely go unheeded, but concern is growing over the economic realities. The television money, when parceled around, never seems to be enough, and the benefits are never evenly distributed. The

rich – that is, the schools more in demand by network schedule-makers – get richer, the poor go deeper into debt. Disparities have widened to the point where many underfunded programs trying to compete at the top level are perpetual losers, both on and off the field.

The winners are primarily those institutions that belong to the founding conferences in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS), namely, the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), the Big East, the Big Ten, the Big 12, the Pacific-10, and the Southeastern Conference (SEC). The BCS is a consortium originally designed and instituted in the early 1990s by conference commissioners to control Division I-A postseason football. The NCAA has no role in the BCS, and even presidents of BCS member institutions are marginalized: for negotiation of BCS television contracts, for example, only conference commissioners and representatives of the television network are at the table, with bowl representatives brought in for the revenue distribution discussions that follow. A small group of conference commissioners controls distribution of all Division I-A postseason football revenues. Conference commissioners are rewarded for successfully generating postseason revenues and so have little incentive to consider other priorities. In allowing commercial interests to prevail over academic concerns and traditions, presidents have abdicated their responsibilities.

Meanwhile, equipment manufacturers inundate prominent coaches and universities with goods and money in exchange for exposure – advertisements of all kinds on campuses, stadiums, and field houses, and logos on uniforms, shoes, and every other conceivable piece of equipment.

There is a clear and sharp message in such deals: This is business; show us the money. Over the last decade, the amounts of money involved have grown tremendously. The University of Michigan's latest contract with Nike, for example, doubled its cash payments from the shoe and apparel company to $1.2 million a year. With royalties, uniforms, and equipment added to that, the seven-year deal is expected to be worth $25 million to $28 million.

The sellout has made at least one longtime manufacturer's representative openly disdainful. He told the presidents on the Commission that they and their counterparts had "sold their souls" to him in the 1970s when he came bearing gifts, and it was their lack of courage to make changes in the interim that put them so deeply into the morass.

The influence of sneaker companies is now pervasive in high school sports as well, both in schools and in summer basketball leagues. These companies have become part of the college recruiting process in many instances, and contribute to the special treatment of athletes from a young age. This special treatment raises players' expectations, shields them from the consequences of their own actions, and teaches them that the rules applied to everyone else don't necessarily apply to them. It exploits athletes as they are eased through high school and college, fin-

ishing their years in school with no semblance of the education needed to negotiate life when their playing days are over.

High school sports today can reflect the worst of their collegiate counterparts. In addition to commercial influences, recruitment and transfer of high school players are far too common, leading to disjointed academic experiences and absurdly dominant teams in some communities. Academic compromises are made for high school athletes as well, leaving them with a diploma but ill-prepared for college-level work. And throughout high school sports, as throughout colleges and universities, the young athletes' ultimate goal has increasingly become a successful career at the professional level, with all the single-minded focus that requires.

College sports as an enterprise with vested commercial interests contradicts the NCAA's stated purpose: to maintain intercollegiate athletics "as an integral part of the educational program, and the athlete as an integral part of the student body, [and to] retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports." The more that line is crossed, the more likely government intervention in the form of IRS challenges to the institutions' tax-exempt status becomes. Current proposed IRS regulations would tax as "business related income" revenues derived from such arrangements as "naming rights" for games or from contracts with such vendors as soft drink companies for exclusive rights in stadiums or arenas.

The *NCAA Manual* also says that postseason play is meant to be controlled to "prevent unjustified intrusions on the time student-athletes devote to their academic programs, and to protect [them] from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises." Yet the number of postseason bowl games has grown from 18 to 25 over the past 10 years, and the men's Division I basketball tournament is three weeks long. Seasons now extend from August until January for football, and from October to April – nearly six months – for basketball.

Sports as big business is suitable for the marketplace and has proved to be a profitable way to tap into the national psyche. Sports as big business for colleges and universities, however, is in direct conflict with nearly every value that should matter for higher education. In the year 2001, the big business of big-time sports all but swamps those values, making a mockery of those professing to uphold them.

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A Call to Action

Ten years ago, when the Knight Commission's first report was circulated, Bo Schembechler, former director of athletics at the University of Michigan, said that the reforms then proposed would sound great for awhile, but "by the turn of the century, things will return to their normal state. This hubbub will pass, as will the so-called reformers."

It would seem that at first blush Mr. Schembechler was correct. The next decade did wind up looking a lot like the last.

But that's not to say reform should be written off or the failures in any way ignored. To the contrary. The fallout from having already waited too long to act is all the more reason to persevere. Each passing day compounds the academic corruption and makes the need for curative measures more compelling.

The Commission has pursued this work over the years because it believes the nation's best purposes are served when colleges and universities are strong centers of creative, constant renewal, true to their basic academic purposes. In the opening years of the new century, however,

those basic purposes are threatened by the imbalance between athletic imperatives and the academy's values. To say it again, the cultural sea change is now complete. Big-time college football and basketball have been thoroughly professionalized and commercialized.

Nevertheless, the Commission believes that the academic enterprise can still redeem itself and its athletic adjunct. It is still possible that all college sports can be reintegrated into the moral and institutional culture of the university. Indeed, in sports other than football and basketball, for the most part that culture still prevails. Athletes can be (and are) honestly recruited. They can be (and are) true "student-athletes," provided with the educational opportunities for which the university exists. The joys of sport can still be honorably celebrated.

But the pressures that have corrupted too many major athletic programs are moving with inexorable force. If current trends continue, more and more campus programs will increasingly mirror the world of professional, market-driven athletics. What that could look like across the board is now present in high-profile form: weakened academic and amateurism standards, millionaire coaches and rampant commercialism, all combined increasingly with deplorable sportsmanship and misconduct.

Even if the larger picture is not yet fully that bleak, the trend is going in entirely the wrong direction. As it accelerates, so too does the danger that the NCAA might divide – with the major programs forming a new association to do business in very much the same way as the professional sports entertainment industry.

Perhaps 40 to 60 universities (mostly those with large public subsidies) could and might indefinitely operate such frankly commercial athletic programs. Critics might say good riddance. But the academic and moral consequences implicit in such an enterprise are unacceptable to anyone who cares about higher education in this nation.

Such a division must not be allowed to happen. It is time to make a larger truth evident to those who want bigger programs, more games, more exposure, and more dollars. It is this: Most Americans believe the nation's colleges and universities are about teaching, learning and research, not about winning and losing. Most pay only passing attention to athletic success or failure. And many big donors pay no attention at all to sports, recognizing in Bart Giamatti's words that it is a "sideshow."

Part of this larger truth requires understanding something that sports-crazed fans are inclined to ignore or denigrate: Loss of academic integrity in the arenas and stadiums of the nation's colleges and universities is far more destructive to their reputations than a dozen losing seasons could ever be.

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Time has demonstrated that the NCAA, even under presidential control, cannot independently do what needs to be done. Its dual mission of keeping sports clean while generating

millions of dollars in broadcasting revenue for member institutions creates a near-irreconcilable conflict. Beyond that, as President Cedric Dempsey has said, the NCAA has "regulated itself into paralysis."

THE NEED TO ACT TOGETHER

The plain truth is that one clear and convincing message needs to be sent to every member of the academic community: What is needed today is not more rules from above, but instead a concerted grassroots effort by the broader academic community – in concert with trustees, administrators and faculty – to restore the balance of athletics and academics on campus.

But a grassroots effort cannot be expected to flourish campus by campus. As long as there is an athletics arms race, unilateral disarmament on the part of one institution would most assuredly be punished swiftly by loss of position and increased vulnerability. Change will come, sanity will be restored, only when the higher education community comes together to meet collectively the challenges its members face.

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Presidents and trustees must work in harness – not wage the battles so commonplace today over control of the athletic enterprise. Presidents cannot act on an issue as emotional and highly visible as athletics without the unwavering public support of their boards. As John Walda, president of the Indiana University board of trustees, told the Commission in early 2001:

> "Trustees must insist that their presidents not only be dedicated to recapturing control of college sports, but that they stand up to the media, the entertainment industry, coaches, and athletics directors when the institution's values are threatened. And when a president takes bold action ... trustees must support and defend their president and his or her decision."

National higher education associations such as the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), in particular, can and should do more to help resolve the persistent problems addressed in this report. Intercollegiate athletics should loom larger in their programming priorities. New and creative programs and services should be offered directly to institutions and their governing boards through joint collaboration among these associations.

Conferences and the NCAA must work together as well. Tensions between conference commissioners and the NCAA must be resolved so that the best interests of intercollegiate athletics and higher education prevail. Power struggles for control of big-time football, revenue distribution, and other matters reflect a culture dominated by competitive rather than academic concerns, and one that often ignores the welfare of the athletes representing their institutions.

Faculty, too, have a critical role to play. Above all, they must defend the academic values of their institutions. Too few faculty speak out on their campus or fight aggressively against meaningless courses or degrees specifically designed to keep athletes eligible, suggesting they have surrendered their role as defenders of academic integrity in the classroom. Further, the academy has capitulated on its responsibility and allowed commercial interests – television, shoe companies, corporate sponsors of all sorts – to dictate the terms under which college sports operate. No academic institution would allow television to arrange its class schedule; neither should television control college athletic schedules. There are scattered signs of faculty awakening, but on many campuses, faculty indifference prevails even when informed critics make their case.

Athletics directors and coaches bear a huge responsibility. Directors of athletics steer the enterprise for their institutions and, in that regard, are in the best position to monitor its direction and raise flags and questions when it heads off course. Coaches are closest to the athletes and have the most influence on the quality of their collegiate experiences. Clearly, pressures on athletics directors and coaches to generate revenues and win at all costs must be mitigated. In turn, athletics directors must see to it that athletics programs are conducted as legitimate and respected components of their institutions. And coaches, quite simply, need to be held more accountable for what goes on around them. They set the tone. "When the cheating starts," the legendary Bear Bryant used to say, "look to the head coach. He's the chairman of the board."

Alumni pressure to escalate athletics programs and produce winning teams distorts and ultimately compromises the values of the institutions they claim to cherish. Alumni must offer strong and visible support to the president and trustees of their alma mater as they work to balance athletics and academics on their campuses. Alumni, better than anyone, should realize that the reputation of their institution depends not on its won-lost record but on its reputation for integrity in all that it undertakes.

A COALITION OF PRESIDENTS

The Commission understands that collective action is key to overcoming the dynamic of the athletics arms race. No single college or university can afford to act unilaterally, nor can one conference act alone. But a determined and focused group of presidents acting together can transform the world of intercollegiate athletics. Just as Archimedes was convinced he could move the world with the right fulcrum for his lever, presidents from a group of powerful conferences could, in collaboration with the NCAA, create the critical mass needed to bring about the fundamental changes this Commission deems essential.

In its earlier reports, the Commission defined a "one-plus-three" model, with the "one" – presidential control – directed toward the "three" – academic integrity, financial integrity, and certification. The Commission here proposes a new "one-plus-three" model for these new times – with the "one," a Coalition of Presidents, directed toward an agenda of academic reform, de-escalation of the athletics arms race, and de-emphasis of the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics. The Coalition of Presidents' goal must be nothing less than the restoration of athletics as a healthy and integral part of the academic enterprise.

The creation of the Coalition is the first order of business, but its creation will be no panacea in and of itself. Given the enormous scope of this reform effort, the Commission recognizes that change will have to be accomplished in a series of steps over time. As in its earlier reports, the Commission feels no obligation to rewrite the *NCAA Manual* or propose solutions to every problem on campus. Starting from the broad principle that athletic departments and athletes should be held to the same standards, rules, policies and practices that apply elsewhere in their institutions, the Commission makes the following recommendations for the Coalition's agenda:

Academics. Our key point is that students who participate in athletics deserve the same rights and responsibilities as all other students. Within that broad framework, the Coalition should focus on the following recommendations:

- Athletes should be mainstreamed through the same academic processes as other students. These specifically include criteria for admission, academic support services, choice of major, and requirements governing satisfactory progress toward a degree.

- Graduation rates must improve. By 2007, teams that do not graduate at least 50 percent of their players should not be eligible for conference championships or for post-season play.

❑ Scholarships should be tied to specific athletes until they (or their entering class) graduate.

❑ The length of playing, practice and postseasons must be reduced both to afford athletes a realistic opportunity to complete their degrees and to enhance the quality of their collegiate experiences.

❑ The NBA and the NFL should be encouraged to develop minor leagues so that athletes not interested in undergraduate study are provided an alternative route to professional careers.

These recommendations are not new. What is novel is the Commission's insistence that a new and independent structure is needed to pursue these proposals aggressively.

The Arms Race. The central point with regard to expenditures is the need to insist that athletic departments' budgets be subject to the same institutional oversight and direct control as other university departments. The Coalition should work to:

❑ Reduce expenditures in big-time sports such as football and basketball. This includes a reduction in the total number of scholarships that may be awarded in Division I-A football.

❑ Ensure that the legitimate and long-overdue need to support women's athletic programs and comply with Title IX is not used as an excuse for soaring costs while expenses in big-time sports are unchecked.

❑ Consider coaches' compensation in the context of the academic institutions that employ them. Coaches' jobs should be primarily to educate young people. Their compensation should be brought into line with prevailing norms across the institution.

❑ Require that agreements for coaches' outside income be negotiated with institutions, not individual coaches. Outside income should be apportioned in the context of an overriding reality: Advertisers are buying the institution's reputation no less than the coaches'.

By 2007, teams that do not graduate at least 50 percent of their players should not be eligible for conference championships or for postseason play.

❑ Revise the plan for distribution of revenue from the NCAA contract with CBS for broadcasting rights to the Division I men's basketball championship. No such revenue should be distributed based on commercial values such as winning and losing. Instead, the revenue distribution plan should reflect values centered on improving academic performance, enhancing athletes' collegiate experiences, and achieving gender equity.

Prohibit athletes from being exploited as advertising vehicles. Uniforms and other apparel should not bear corporate trademarks or the logos of manufacturers or game sponsors.

Again, the recommendations put forth here have been heard before. The Coalition offers a chance to make progress on them at long last.

Commercialization. The fundamental issue is easy to state: Colleges and universities must take control of athletics programs back from television and other corporate interests. In this regard, the Coalition should:

❑ Insist that institutions alone should determine when games are played, how they are broadcast, and which companies are permitted to use their athletics contests as advertising vehicles.

❑ Encourage institutions to reconsider all sports-related commercial contracts against the backdrop of traditional academic values.

❑ Work to minimize commercial intrusions in arenas and stadiums so as to maintain institutional control of campus identity.

❑ Prohibit athletes from being exploited as advertising vehicles. Uniforms and other apparel should not bear corporate trademarks or the logos of manufacturers or game sponsors. Other athletic equipment should bear only the manufacturer's normal label or trademark.

❑ Support federal legislation to ban legal gambling on college sports in the state of Nevada and encourage college presidents to address illegal gambling on their campuses.

The Commission is not naïve. It understands that its recommendations governing expenditures and commercialization may well be difficult to accept, even among academics and members of the public deeply disturbed by reports of academic misconduct in athletics programs. The reality is that many severe critics of intercollegiate athletics accept at face value the arguments

about the financial exigencies of college sports. In the face of these arguments, they conclude that little can be done to rein in the arms race or to curb the rampant excesses of the market.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The athletics arms race continues only on the strength of the widespread belief that nothing can be done about it. Expenditures roar out of control only because administrators have become more concerned with financing what is in place than rethinking what they are doing. And the market is able to invade the academy both because it is eager to do so and because overloaded administrators rarely take the time to think about the consequences. The Coalition of Presidents can rethink the operational dynamics of intercollegiate athletics, prescribe what needs to be done, and help define the consequences of continuing business as usual.

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCING

The Commission recommends that the president of the American Council on Education (ACE), working with the NCAA and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), bring together presidential and trustee leadership drawn from ACE, the NCAA, AGB, and Division I-A conferences to establish the Coalition of Presidents. We emphasize the importance of the commitment and active involvement of *presidents*; Coalition members must be drawn from their group. This is an extraordinary undertaking that cannot be delegated to conference commissioners or the executive staffs of the organizations represented. As we said in our initial report 10 years ago, "The Commission's bedrock conviction is that university presidents are the key to successful reform."

The presidents who must step forward should represent the conferences conducting the most visible and successful athletics programs – in terms of national championships and revenues produced. These are the conferences representing the lion's share of big-time programs. They include: the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), the Big East, the Big Ten, the Big 12, the Pacific-10, and the Southeastern Conference (SEC). But membership must not be restricted to presidents from those conferences alone. Institutional compromises in favor of athletics are not limited to the biggest sports schools. Coalition membership, therefore, should be strengthened by presidents from conferences that are not founding members of the BCS but that also compete at the Division I-A level.

The Coalition of Presidents should work collaboratively with the NCAA Division I Board of Directors, meeting jointly from time to time to identify priorities for review and discussion, focus on reform solutions, and develop a comprehensive timeline for appropriate action by the Division I board and by the officers of other higher education associations.

To protect the Coalition's objectivity and the credibility of its recommendations, it is absolutely critical in the Commission's view that it be financially independent of the athletics enterprises it is designed to influence, namely, the NCAA and the conference offices. The Commission believes the Coalition should be financed independently with assessments and dues from its member institutions, support from the higher education associations, and perhaps grants from the philanthropic community.

To complement and support the critical work that must be done, we recommend that Knight Foundation consider helping fund the Coalition of Presidents with matching grants based on performance to the American Council on Education, and establishing, perhaps with other foundations and the Association of Governing Boards, a separate and independent body – an Institute for Intercollegiate Athletics. The Commission envisions the Institute not as an action agency but as a watchdog to maintain pressure for change. It should keep the problems of college sports visible, provide moral leadership in defense of educational integrity, monitor progress toward reform goals, and issue periodic report cards.

If it proves impossible to create a system of intercollegiate athletics that can live honorably within the American college and university, then ... the nation's colleges and universities [should] get out of the business of big-time sports.

A FINAL WORD

This Commission concludes its work with an admission and an exhortation. The admission first. Most of us who serve on the Knight Commission have held leadership positions while the excesses we deplore here have distorted American higher education. We offer our indictment of the existing situation painfully aware that it calls us, no less than others, to account.

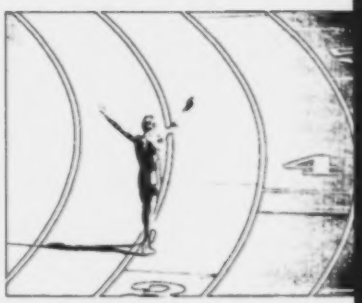
The exhortation involves a strong reaffirmation of the role and purpose of higher education in enhancing the well-being of our nation. That role is best filled and these purposes best achieved when integrity, character and honor are the hallmarks of academic activities across the board – on the playing field as much as in the classroom and laboratory.

There are no downsides to thoroughgoing reform. When and if accomplished, athletic contests would still be attended by their fans and covered by the media even if the players were students first and athletes second. None of the measures proposed here will diminish competitiveness. The games will continue and be just as exciting – perhaps more so if played without television timeouts interrupting and changing the very nature of the game. Although there might be some grumbling in the short term, the enthusiasm of students and alumni will not be abated over the long haul, largely because most will not notice the difference.

But if there is no downside to deep and sustained reform, continued inattention to the problems described here is fraught with potential dangers. Failure to engage in self-corrective

action may leave higher education vulnerable to external interventions, especially legislative. In some areas that would be welcome; as in steps to control the influence of gambling. In others, it would be unwelcome, as in a possible attack on college sports' tax-exempt status.

Worse, some predict that failure to reform from within will lead to the collapse of the current intercollegiate athletics system. Early warning signs of just that are abundant and should not be ignored. If it proves impossible to create a system of intercollegiate athletics that can live honorably within the American college and university, then responsible citizens must join with academic and public leaders to insist that the nation's colleges and universities get out of the business of big-time sports.



The Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics trusts that day will never arrive. The search now is for the will to act. Surely the colleges and universities of the land have within their community the concerned and courageous leaders it will take to return intercollegiate athletics to the mainstream of American higher education. If not, it is not the integrity of intercollegiate sports that will be held up to question, but the integrity of higher education itself.

Additional Issues for Consideration

The following issues were discussed during the course of the Knight Commission's deliberations but were not considered in enough detail to enable the Commission to make specific recommendations. We list them here because we believe they are worthy of careful consideration.

Freshmen Ineligibility. While the arguments in favor of freshmen ineligibility are compelling in many respects, it is also true that such a policy would preclude many athletes who are fully capable of both succeeding academically and competing at a high level their freshman year from doing so.

Recruiting Restrictions. Unquestionably, recruiting is the bane of many a coach's existence. It is time-consuming, expensive, and fosters a skewed sense of expectations and priorities on the part of the recruited athlete. The Commission discussed restrictions on recruiting such as limiting the geographic range from which an institution could recruit, restricting recruiting expenses to a percentage of the overall athletics budget, shortening recruiting seasons, and reducing the number of permissible contacts with recruits. The effects of such proposals, however, likely would vary widely across institutions and thus they must be carefully reviewed.

Need-Based Financial Aid. The possibility of basing all financial aid to athletes on need to both reduce costs and to free students from the current dynamics of the coach-athlete relationship was discussed. Regardless of these benefits, though, other students on campus are offered scholarships for different talents. Further, many argue that athletes already are exploited for their skills despite the value of their athletic scholarships, and to reduce them would only exacerbate the situation.

Early Departures to the NBA. The use of collegiate level programs by basketball players to develop their skills for a year or two before going to the NBA – with little regard to academic considerations – is inappropriate. It is unclear, however, whether such athletes can or should be prevented by either NBA or NCAA restrictions from leaving college early for the professional level. In this regard, the Commission has urged the NBA (and the NFL) to develop minor leagues so that athletes not interested in undergraduate study are provided an alternative route to professional careers.

Certification and Accreditation. The Commission considered whether the larger accreditation process for colleges and universities should uniformly include review of athletics programs. A potential drawback of this could be the demise of the NCAA certification program, with all the benefits that stem from its detailed and extensive mandatory self-study and review.

Antitrust Exemptions. The possibility of supporting an antitrust exemption for the NCAA to regain control of televised football and its associated revenue was raised, as well as an exemption for controlling coaches' salaries. In the former instance, however, Commissioners were uncertain whether it would be in the best interests of intercollegiate athletics if the NCAA were to control college football television and revenues. In the latter case, more information and research are necessary before such a recommendation can be made.

Action on Knight Commission Recommendations of March 1991

PRESIDENTIAL CONTROL

Trustees should explicitly endorse and reaffirm presidential authority in all matters of athletics governance, including control of financial and personnel matters. Trustees should annually review the athletics program and work with the president to define the faculty's role in athletics.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses. Following the release of the Commission's first report, more than 100 institutions and organizations reported adoption of these principles. Additionally, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) has worked to educate trustees about their appropriate role in intercollegiate athletics through articles and white papers in its periodicals and publications, and via speakers and meetings focused on this topic.

Presidents should act on their obligation to control conferences.

Based on testimony before the Commission during 2000-2001, presidents do not in practice control at least a handful of Division I-A conferences. At the national level, the 1992 NCAA convention amended the NCAA Constitution to require presidential approval of conference-sponsored legislative initiatives.

Presidents should control the NCAA.

In 1997 the NCAA restructured, giving presidents full authority for the governance of intercollegiate athletics at the national level. The Association's top body, the Executive Committee, is comprised entirely of CEOs, and the NCAA's three divisions are led by presidential groups.

Presidents should commit their institutions to equity in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics.

Opportunities for women to compete for NCAA member institutions in NCAA championship sports increased 57 percent between 1991 and 2000. Despite this tremendous progress, during the 1998-1999 academic year (the most recent year for which data are available), 41 percent of these varsity athletes were women even though women comprise 52 percent of the undergraduates at NCAA member institutions. Women at the Division I level in 1999-2000 – where they represent 53 percent of the student body – received 43 percent of athletic scholarship dollars and 32 percent of overall athletics budgets. Overall, 48 percent of all participants in NCAA-sponsored championships in 2000-2001 were women and 52 percent were men.

Presidents should control their institutions' involvement with commercial television.

Presidents have been actively involved with contract negotiations with CBS, which broadcasts the Division I men's basketball tournament, and with ESPN. Their involvement, however, has not led to institutional control over the commercial aspects of televised sports. Further, testimony before the Commission during 2000-2001 indicated that presidents are not actively involved in negotiations for televising the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) postseason football bowl games.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The NCAA should strengthen initial eligibility requirements:

The number of required units of high school academic work for initial eligibility should be raised from 11 to 15.

The 1992 NCAA convention raised the Divisions I and II core curriculum requirements from 11 to 13 units, effective in 1995.

High school students should be ineligible for reimbursed campus visits (or signing a letter of intent) until they show reasonable promise of being able to meet degree requirements.

Between 1991 and 1997 the NCAA adopted seven proposals related to proof of a prospect's academic credentials required before an official (expense paid) visit. Criteria included minimum required test scores and core academic courses completed. In 1997, however, in response to concerns expressed by the U.S. Department of Justice, the NCAA eliminated specific academic criteria and instead requires only that the prospect submit a test score and academic transcript prior to an official visit.

Junior college transfers who did not meet NCAA initial eligibility requirements upon graduation from high school should sit out a year of competition after transfer.

This recommendation has not been adopted by the NCAA. In 1996, however, the NCAA adopted higher minimum percentage of degree requirements for all junior college transfers in Division I football and men's basketball. These athletes must have completed 35 percent – versus 25 percent – of their degree requirements to be immediately eligible in their third year of collegiate enrollment (see below).

The NCAA should study the feasibility of requiring that the range of academic abilities of incoming athletes approximates the range of abilities of the entire freshmen class.

In its first five-year cycle, the NCAA certification program gathered data related to this recommendation by requiring that institutions compare the academic profiles of all incoming athletes with the rest of the incoming class as a whole. The next certification cycle improves upon this assessment by requiring that comparisons be made on a sport-by-sport basis, as well as by gender and racial subgroups. Significant differences in academic profiles must be noted and explained.

The letter of intent should serve the student as well as the athletics department.

Since 1991, no changes have been made in the national letter of intent program. However, athletes are permitted to appeal the terms and conditions of the letter of intent. Approximately 20,000 such documents are signed each year by prospects planning to attend NCAA Division I and II institutions. During the 1999-2000 academic year – a typical year – 170 letters of intent were appealed: 86 percent of the appeals were approved, 12 percent of the athletes were granted a partial release, and 2 percent of the appeals were denied. These data indicate flexibility in the administration of the national letter of intent program.

Athletics scholarships should be offered for a five-year period.

No action to date.

Athletics eligibility should depend upon progress toward a degree.

The 1992 NCAA convention adopted new Division I requirements stipulating minimum percentages of credits earned toward a specific degree, as well as a minimum grade point average toward that degree, for athletes' third and fourth years of eligibility, effective in 1996. Further, the permissible number of credits earned during the summer to maintain eligibility was capped, and the new satisfactory progress toward degree requirements were made applicable to midyear transfer students after a semester rather than a year on campus.

Graduation rates of athletes should be a criterion for NCAA certification.

NCAA certification incorporates graduation rates as a criterion. In the program's first five-year cycle, however, graduation rates of all athletes were compared with the student body as a whole. The next certification cycle improves upon this assessment by requiring that comparisons be made on a sport-by-sport basis, as well as by gender and racial subgroups. Significant differences in graduation rates must be noted and explained.

FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

All funds raised and spent in connection with intercollegiate athletics programs will be channeled through the institution's general treasury. The athletics department budget will be developed and monitored in accordance with general budgeting procedures on campus.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses. Data concerning its adoption are unavailable. The NCAA certification program, however, addresses these issues specifically in the first operating principle under the Financial Integrity section of the program's self-study document, which each Division I institution must address in detail.

Athletics costs must be reduced.

Some efforts to reduce costs have been made, such as reducing the number of allowable scholarships in certain sports and limiting assistant coaches' salaries in men's basketball. In the latter instance, however, the salary caps were successfully challenged as a violation of antitrust law; the NCAA settlement with the coaches cost over $50 million. At the institutional level, athletics costs rose steadily during the 1990s, such that the NCAA's latest financial study reports that roughly just 15 percent of Divisions I and II institutions operate in the black. From 1997 to 1999, deficits at Division I-A institutions where expenses exceeded revenues increased 18 percent.

Athletics grants-in-aid should cover the full cost of attendance for the very needy.

No action to date, although the NCAA's Special Assistance Fund available to needy athletes has increased from $3 million in 1991 to $10 million in 1998, and is scheduled to increase to $10.4 million in 2002. Additionally, in 2002 the NCAA will institute a new $17 million Student Opportunity Fund, which can be broadly used for anything that benefits athletes but not, specifically, on salaries or facilities. Each fund is scheduled to increase annually throughout the duration of the NCAA's 11-year CBS contract.

The independence of athletics foundations and booster clubs must be curbed.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses. Data concerning changes in the numbers of independent athletics foundations and booster clubs are unavailable.

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The NCAA formula for sharing television revenues from the Division I men's basketball tournament must be reviewed by university presidents.

The NCAA Executive Committee and the Division I Board of Directors, both composed entirely of presidents, have been actively involved in review of the formula for distribution of revenues from the new $6.2 billion CBS contract. The formula was approved in early 2001 by the NCAA Executive Committee.

All athletics-related coaches' income should be reviewed and approved by the university.

The 1992 NCAA convention adopted legislation requiring annual, prior written approval from the president for all athletically related income from sources outside the institution. That legislation, however, was eliminated in 2000 as part of an NCAA deregulation effort.

Coaches should be offered longterm contracts.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses. While it appears that more longterm contracts are being offered to big-time football and men's basketball coaches, the pressure to win has not diminished.

Institutional support should be available for intercollegiate athletics.

Progress in this regard has been minimal. The NCAA Division I Philosophy Statement, for example, still contains language recommending that its members strive "to finance [their] athletics programs insofar as possible from revenues generated by the program itself." Moreover, several states have laws prohibiting the use of state funds on intercollegiate athletics programs. In Division I-A, institutional support, direct government funding, and student activity fees have increased as a percentage of total revenues from 14 percent in 1993 to 16 percent in 1997.

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CERTIFICATION

The NCAA should adopt a certification program for all institutions granting athletics aid that would independently authenticate the integrity of each institution's athletics program.

Division I institutions must undergo NCAA certification of their athletics departments. When the program was first adopted, institutions were meant to be certified once every five years; since then, the cycle has been extended to once every 10 years. Division II institutions, which also award athletics aid, have not adopted the certification program.

Universities should undertake comprehensive, annual policy audits of their athletics programs.

The Division I certification program requires an annual compilation of athletics policy audits and other data.

The certification program should include the major themes advanced by the Knight Commission, i.e., the "one-plus-three" model.

The NCAA certification program substantially incorporates the fundamental principles of the "one-plus-three" model. The four major components of athletics certification are: governance and commitment to rules compliance; academic integrity; fiscal integrity; and equity, welfare and sportsmanship.

ADDENDUM

In addition to actions taken related specifically to the Knight Commission's recommendations, the NCAA has also done the following since the release of the Commission's first report in 1991:

❑ Limited costs by reducing the list of printed and video recruiting materials that institutions and conferences are permitted to send to prospective athletes.

❑ Restricted the use of correspondence courses for establishing full-time enrollment and meeting satisfactory progress requirements.

❑ Required prospective athletes who graduate from a two-year college to earn at least 25 percent of their credit hours from the two-year institution awarding the degree.

❑ Limited the use of transferable degree credit hours that partial or nonqualifiers can earn during the summer preceding their transfer from a two- to a four-year college.

❑ Allowed basketball players to receive athletics financial aid to attend summer school prior to their first term of full-time enrollment.

❑ Adopted principles promoting gender equity, student-athlete welfare, and sportsmanship and ethical conduct.

❑ Allowed athletes to earn money from jobs during the academic year.

❑ Strengthened the rules governing Division I men's and women's basketball midyear transfers, who will not be immediately eligible the academic year they transfer, regardless of their academic qualifications, beginning with the 2001-2002 academic year.

Appendix C

Meeting Participants

August 28, 2000

James Isch
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November 27-28, 2000

Ruben Boumtje-Boumtje
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Carolyn Schlie Femovich
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Patriot League

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Roy Kramer
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January 22-23, 2001

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The Commission acknowledges the many individuals and organizations whose support of our work made this report possible.

First we wish to express our profound gratitude to the Board of Trustees of Knight Foundation for their long and steady commitment to creating a new climate for intercollegiate athletics. College sports and higher education both have benefited significantly from the Foundation's decade-long interest.

Hodding Carter III, current Knight Foundation president, has lent invaluable perspective and energy to the reconvened Commission. His predecessor, Creed Black, has been a driving force throughout the Commission's life. His vision and determination have sustained this effort.

It is an understatement to say that this report and the many hearings that preceded it would have been impossible without the tireless, dedicated and thoughtful guidance of the Commission's executive director, Maureen Devlin. She has been our shepherd, patient but persistent goad, and strong right hand.

Larry Meyer was an enormous help with all our communications needs. Susan Gomez flawlessly handled the Commission's meeting arrangements and logistics, and Nada Elia provided important research assistance and administrative support.

John Underwood and James Harvey contributed to the drafting and editing of this document. The report was designed by Jacques Auger Design Associates and printed by Haff-Daugherty Graphics.

Finally, we wish to extend our thanks to the many men and women – university presidents, faculty, conference commissioners, athletics directors, coaches, athletes, authors, professional sports executives, television officials, NCAA representatives, leaders of national higher education associations, and others – who took the time to share their thoughts with us. Their participation was the absolutely essential foundation of all our deliberations.

Appendix E

Statement of Principles

The Commission concluded its first report in 1991 with this Statement of Principles. Upon review, we find these principles to be just as applicable today as they were 10 years ago. We commend them to campus administrators and boards of trustees for their consideration and support.

Preamble: This institution is committed to a philosophy of firm institutional control of athletics, to the unquestioned academic and financial integrity of our athletics program, and to the accountability of the athletics department to the values and goals befitting higher education. In support of that commitment, the board, officers, faculty and staff of this institution have examined and agreed to the following general principles as a guide to our participation in intercollegiate athletics:

I. The educational values, practices and mission of this institution determine the standards by which we conduct our intercollegiate athletics program.

II. The responsibility and authority for the administration of the athletics department, including all basic policies, personnel and finances, are vested in the president.

III. The welfare, health and safety of student-athletes are primary concerns of athletics administration on this campus. This institution will provide student-athletes with the opportunity for academic experiences as close as possible to the experiences of their classmates.

IV. Every student athlete – male and female, majority and minority, in all sports – will receive equitable and fair treatment.

V. The admission of student-athletes – including junior college transfers – will be based on their showing reasonable promise of being successful in a course of study leading to an academic degree. That judgment will be made by admissions officials.

VI. Continuing eligibility to participate in intercollegiate athletics will be based on students being able to demonstrate each academic term that they will graduate within five years of their enrolling. Students who do not pass this test will not play.

VII. Student-athletes, in each sport, will be graduated in at least the same proportion as nonathletes who have spent comparable time as full-time students.

VIII. All funds raised and spent in connection with intercollegiate athletics programs will be channeled through the institution's general treasury, not through independent groups, whether internal or external. The athletics department budget will be developed and monitored in accordance with general budgeting procedures on campus.

IX. All athletics-related income from nonuniversity sources for the coaches and athletics administrators will be reviewed and approved by the university. In cases where the income involves the university's functions, facilities or name, contracts will be negotiated with the institution.

X. We will conduct annual academic and fiscal audits of the athletics program. Moreover, we intend to seek NCAA certification that our athletics program complies with the principles herein. We will promptly correct any deficiencies and will conduct our athletics program in a manner worthy of this distinction.

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